

## Syllabus

The Tri-College Consortium (Tri-Co) is composed of Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore Colleges. All three institutions are small liberal arts colleges located in the Philadelphia suburbs. Haverford also has just under 1400 students, and Swarthmore has nearly 1700. Bryn Mawr has nearly 1400 undergraduates and a small number of post-baccalaureate and graduate students. All three colleges were founded in the early-to-mid 1800's as Quaker institutions, but are now non-denominational.

The Tri-Co Consortium means that students from any one of the three campuses can take courses offered at the other institutions. Bryn Mawr and Haverford are even more closely linked in the Bi-College Consortium (Bi-Co), and it is common for Bi-Co students to take classes, attend social events, or even have their academic major advisors at the other campus. Swarthmore is more geographically distant, so cross-enrollments are less frequent.

The Tri-Co Linguistics Department was founded at Swarthmore College, but since 2011 has operated as a single department across the three campuses. The department has tenured faculty at Haverford and Swarthmore, and offers courses at all three campuses. We graduate roughly 20-30 Linguistics majors each year. The major requires eight one-credit courses: Syntax; Semantics; Phonetics & Phonology; one course on Language & Society, which may be fulfilled by a class on socio- or anthropological linguistics; one course on the structure of a non-Indo-European language, for which frequent offerings include Structure of ASL, Chinese, Kyrgyz, Navajo, Wamesa, and Zapotec; the senior thesis seminar; and two electives.<sup>1</sup> The structure of the major is non-hierarchical: None of Syntax, Semantics, Phonetics & Phonology, or Sociolinguistics has any required prerequisites, and most electives require no or only minimal prerequisites. Introduction to Linguistics is not required, but may fulfill one of the two electives. Linguistics minors do not write a thesis. (For full major and minor requirements and course listings, see the department's websites at [www.brynmawr.edu/linguistics](http://www.brynmawr.edu/linguistics), [www.haverford.edu/linguistics](http://www.haverford.edu/linguistics), and [www.swarthmore.edu/linguistics](http://www.swarthmore.edu/linguistics).)

The thesis seminar is the capstone of the major, and is usually taken by students in the fall of their senior year. Normally all Linguistics majors will write a thesis, though this may occasionally be waived at the discretion of the department chair, usually for double-majors writing a thesis for their other major which deals with linguistic matters. Joint theses which fulfill the requirements for both majors are also common, in which case students will have an advisor from both departments. Sections of the thesis seminar are offered concurrently at the Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore campuses. Each section is normally co-taught by one to three faculty advisors, one for every five students. Seniors are assigned to their faculty thesis advisors, and thereby their seminar section, based on their thesis topic and other factors. The seminar meets once a week for a roughly two-and-a-half-hour block on Friday afternoons. We

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<sup>1</sup> Honors majors at Swarthmore have additional requirements, and write a two-credit thesis instead of the one credit required of other majors. Students pursuing a special major in Linguistics & Languages also have a somewhat different set of requirements, but write a one-credit thesis.

meet in person for instruction on research and writing and student presentations for the first five weeks of the semester and in Week 11; otherwise, students may use the time to work independently and meet with their peer and faculty readers either in the classroom or elsewhere. The defense draft of the thesis is due on the last day of classes, and defenses with the faculty readers occur in December during finals period. The full schedule of course topics and assignments is included in the syllabus.

The learning outcomes for the course as stated in the syllabus are as follows:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Gain familiarity and meaningfully engage with the essential foundational and advanced literature relating to their topic;
- Select and correctly implement appropriate methods, formal theories, and technologies;
- Understand the best practices for responsible and ethical collection, storage, and use of data in ways that respect the relevant speakers/signers and their communities and cultures;
- Demonstrate an understanding of proper scientific methodology for collecting data, and organize that data in meaningful ways that clearly demonstrate important patterns;
- Construct useful, appropriate hypotheses, rigorously and clearly formulated, to explain the observed patterns in the data, and convincingly argue for why your hypotheses are superior to the logical alternatives;
- Produce noteworthy or innovative insights into their topic;
- Generate clear, logically structured prose in line with general standards of academic writing, using appropriate formatting and citation practices.

The learning outcomes are assessed using the thesis rubric included in the supplementary materials here, which is filled out by the faculty readers after the defense. The rubric is not shared with the students, and is meant to be used for assessment of the program, not to determine individual grades.